

THE LABOUR ORGANISER

No. 139

JANUARY, 1933.

Price 4d.



Topics of the Month

NOT in our time, not even during the War, probably not in the last hundred years has a New Year been ushered in to the accompaniment of so much genuine despair, distress and hopelessness among so large a section of the community—and not of this country only. Will 1933 see better times? To be frank about it we would answer—not for the British worker, unless a miracle happens and a Socialist Government is returned to power. It is this frank facing up to the situation that we believe is necessary among the workers to-day. So long as that arch-humbbug, Mr. MacDonald, retains the seat (and salary) that was the price of his betrayal, so long will be remain the tool of the Tories to enact further “economies,” further “cuts,” further repression and reaction. The clock goes steadily back, and indeed the real effects of what has already been done are yet to be felt. There is going to be no “revival,” for the workers at any rate, under a capitalist Government, fighting tooth and nail to retain a system failing and falling before its very eyes. Bernard Shaw has truly said that prosperity — if it ever returns—will hardly be noticed by the mass of the people.

Pessimism? No, bald facts, to be digested by the workers, and *by our Movement*. How many Johnnies in the Labour Party are claiming to-day that these same facts make our progress difficult, and want to wait till the workers experience better times before taking bold steps to extend our ranks and multiply our forces? **THESE ARE THE TIMES**, my fellows, when Socialists should be up and doing, when **SOCIALISM** should ring through the land, when the grand reconstruction of Society that

we plan, should be as a flaming torch to lead the host to salvation, and when our ranks should be recruited and multiplied two, three, four—a hundred fold from out of the disillusioned and despairing. Who are these cowards that they should hinder us from telling the people to save themselves—and in the only way by enrolling in a mighty army to conquer and attain Socialism? When in all history did “prosperity” bring to the slave freedom from his chains, or release to those oppressed? Rome “flourished”—but on slavery; the “grand monarch” and his tribe rolled in wealth, but the people pined; the Southern States boomed, but on negro backs; Victorian industrialism was pictured prosperity, but wage-slavery, slumdom and a C3 population were its bitter fruit. And so we could illustrate. No! No! the time for breeding real revolutionaries is in the hour of their understanding. The iron has already entered. It is enough. And it is **NOW**—or never!

And what has all this to do with organisation? Just this: that if we cannot get members now, we never will! We are sick to death of craven comrades who seek every excuse to funk every organised plan to develop our forces. Years ago, in the boom years, these same people told us the workers were too well off to want to pay for their politics (and in any case they didn't). Every year since it has been the same story with variations—reduced wages, unemployment; the sins of the Labour Government, or the after-effects of the General Election. And in spite of these whines and shivers membership *has* boomed, and in many of the worst-hit neighbourhoods! And during the last few months tens of thousands of unemployed have been organised in unemployed organisations and pay a penny a week to same gladly and cheerfully. Yes, you shirkers in the Great Mem-

Another Course about to Commence

Our readers will be interested to find in this issue a complete list of successful students who qualified last year for a certificate of proficiency under the above scheme. We understand that the prospectus for another course is now in preparation, and students may now be enrolled.

The scheme of Study and Examination is open to—

- (1) Agents and Organisers of the Party desiring to qualify for an Agent's Grade A certificate.
- (2) Persons in the Party who are desirous of becoming Agents and of qualifying by examination for a proficiency certificate.
- (3) Persons in the Party who by taking some, or all, of the courses desire to make themselves more efficient as officials, particularly for the conduct of local elections.

As our readers will remember, the scheme is arranged on a correspondence basis, and each month a booklet of loose-leaf notes and folios are posted to students. These notes in themselves are of inestimable value, and as a practical guide to the subjects or as a key to further study, they are unequalled. The notes are divided conveniently for weekly reading, and the student is required to answer a number of questions which are posted to the Head Office and duly returned with comments or corrections.

The work divides itself conveniently into eight monthly study courses, but it is spread over a longer period to allow for holidays, etc. The first issue of notes will be in February.

The inclusive fee for the courses and the examination is 15/6, and this covers the cost of the complete set of booklets and postages from Head Office. An arrangement is also in existence which enables students to obtain, if desired, the more costly reference books on an instalment plan of payments.

We desire once again to commend the study course to our readers, and particularly to present agents. So far fifty-eight agents have passed the examinations. A number of agents hold certificates which have been granted them on account of their experience, and which are known as

"Service Certificates." But these figures indicate that there are a large number of agents who hold neither a certificate of proficiency nor a Service Certificate, and we venture to suggest to these colleagues that this position exposes them to some reflection and some risk. It is satisfactory to note that a number of agents who are holders of Service Certificates have, nevertheless, sat for the examinations, and obtained certificates, and we think this example is one well worth following.

It should be pointed out that the whole purpose of the scheme is not to attract or train the merely ambitious person. Rather the object is to confer qualification on those best fitted to serve the Party, and in this connection Local Parties and their officers are requested to make suggestions to those persons on whom the scheme might confer a benefit. In short, the scheme is becoming more and more selective, and this is all to the good.

REGISTRATION, 1933.

Under date January 6th, the Home Office has circularised Registration Officers as follows:—

"I am directed by the Secretary of State to say that he has had under consideration the procedure to be followed in preparing the register of electors in 1933.

"A direction was given by the Secretary of State in connection with the preparation of each of the last four registers that the Forms A and D should be delivered to all householders in the course of the house-to-house inquiry. It appears to the Secretary of State, after consultation with Registration Officers of Political Parties, that in order to ensure the completeness and accuracy of the new register it is desirable that, as on the former occasions, returns should be made by the householders and occupiers. He directs, therefore, that the Registration Officer shall cause the appropriate form of Return to be delivered at all premises."

Will readers who make enquiries on the above matter and allege that forms are not issued in their districts, please note that the above is a definite direction to Registration Officers?

What we said in 1932

HAVE YOU FOLLOWED THIS ADVICE?

During the past twelve months abundant evidence has reached the offices of the "Labour Organiser" showing that its efforts and advice have not been wasted. Again and again our correspondence and our columns have borne witness to the fact that the enthusiast and the energetic worker have taken to heart the suggestions we have made, and put them into practice with excellent results.

The "Labour Organiser" can justly claim that its existence and work has had an immense effect on Party organisation. We have sown—and the Party has reaped. We are satisfied at this, but we are not so satisfied when seed falls on barren or stony ground.

And because we desire more seed to sprout and a better and better harvest in 1933, we venture to recall to our readers some of the suggestions we made in 1932.

JANUARY. The "Labour Organiser" helped the Labour Party in launching the "Big Campaign." In this number we advised the appointment of visitors to look up lagging and lapsing members. We stressed the appointment of Literature Secretaries. We urged County Divisions on to the task of fighting District Council elections. We suggested a new recreation, i.e., that of calculating the average age of one's Party meeting—just by way of showing how far short we fall in organising Youth. We suggested sending information to Head Office concerning the enemy's speaking campaigns. We advised the appointment of "Social Committees." We suggested periodic meetings of Party officials only. We commenced publication of a new feature, "The Line Engaged," and during the year some dozens of everyday little queries have been answered under this heading. Our January number contained an article under "Law and Practice," regarding the neutrality of returning officers at elections, and the steps taken to ensure impartiality. In this number was also included an interesting competition, and a complete index of the previous year's contents.

FEBRUARY. What an epic story Carlisle told in the February "Labour Organiser"—"How Carlisle Got Its 4,430 Members." We gave several pages of hints on the Spring Elections,

giving points and procedure for each of them. A new feature was a budget of news under the heading "In a Nut Shell." "The Line Engaged" was another feature, and a dozen and a half of queries were answered under this heading. We discussed under "Notes and Notions" the problem of keeping members, and the associated problem of collectorship. We gave sundry useful hints on the Membership Campaign.

MARCH. In March we asked the Movement to end the inquest on the late Labour Government. We recalled "that the mills will never grind with the water that has passed." Our hint was taken. We urged Parties to press forward the selection of candidates with every energy in command. Another dozen and half questions were answered, and we told a story of some amazing irregularities in rural polling stations. Under "Law and Practice" we discussed the residence qualification for local government candidates. Under "Notes and Notions," among other instructive matters, we advised more specific attention to Head Office circulars, the holding of flower shows, and we discussed the present tendencies regarding the payment of subsidies by Trades Unions to constituency Parties.

APRIL. "Make Sure of your Speaker" was an article prompted by the disappointments which many receive; we suggested means for minimising the evil. We dealt in this number with the leakage which removals cause to Local Parties. Miss Monica Whately contributed a challenging article on "Do We Lack Courtesy?" Another competition appeared, and among a miscellaneous lot of useful matter which appeared under various heads, we note we dealt with the question of Men's Sections; the need for training in Party work; the extent to which Parties should indulge in the giving of free advice; the method of distributing literature at public meetings; presiding officers infringing the Ballot Act; filling casual and ordinary vacancies at same election, etc., etc.

MAY. "Shall We Insure Our Members?" was an article which opened up a striking new idea regarding Labour Party Membership. The

Movement has not yet made up its mind whether in future some "benefit" shall be accorded to members. In this issue we had something to say regarding Party finances, and we gave our ideas of what the Party needed. "How to Use Your Membership" was an important article worthy of re-reading. In this issue we discussed the value of scientifically recording Party membership and progress, and showed how leakages might be stopped thereby. We discussed again the question of membership, and we also showed in another article that cheap membership doesn't pay. This issue contained some inspiring news concerning membership progress at Woolwich and Deptford.

JUNE. An article, "Drama to the Aid of Local Parties," created some interest. In this issue we discussed the problem of the mining areas, and also the question of individual members and membership of Trades Unions. Under "Notes and Notions" we discussed "organisation to the season," and some activities which were essentially summer jobs. A lot of news was given "In a Nut Shell," and our readers discussed the question of benefits for individual members.

JULY. In an article, "Sack the Economy Committee," we discussed the Party's real need in relation to finance. Our advice has not yet been accepted, but we still hope to hear some day that the Economy Committee has itself fallen a victim of the axe. Under "Law and Practice" we gave a review of the differences in minor procedure at Parliamentary and Municipal Elections. Among other questions discussed was that of fixed or summoned Party meetings; the question of recognition of County Federations; the morality of Draws and Sweepstakes; the basis of representation of Local Parties; difficulties concerning selection meetings; activities during the registration period; and the position of an alien on a Borough Council. Our readers continued to discuss the question of insuring new members.

AUGUST. This was a varied number, made up mostly in small packets. Under "Law and Practice" we continued to discuss the differences in procedure at local government elections. We reprinted from the "Labour Organiser" of July, 1920, an article by the editor entitled "In London

Town." We reproduced some model standing orders for Local Parties, and discussed organisation for the sale of Party publications. Of this number we might write *multum in parvo*.

SEPTEMBER. A feature of our September issue was a discussion of the Labour Party Conference Agenda, and what the editor thought about some of the resolutions. We discussed again the relationship of Federations of Labour Parties both to Headquarters and to constituency Parties. An interesting and instructive article entitled "Own Your Hall and Pay Your Way" gave practical advice, and example in both respects. In this issue we commenced publication of an important article entitled "The Law of Libel and Slander." Among other matters we discussed the question of the powers of a Chairman to give a casting vote; the extent to which pension might disqualify the holder from sitting on a Local Government body; free insurance for a local Labour journal. We also gave some advice regarding village meetings.

OCTOBER. The Municipal Elections necessarily were a feature of our October number. In this issue we were also able to announce and reproduce photographs of the newly-appointed National Organisers. An interesting article on Sports Clubs for Labour Parties gave our readers some good reading from Reading. The article on the "Law of Libel and Slander" was continued. The new scheme for By-election finance was presented to our readers, as was other news matter arising from the Leicester Conferences. The question of business votes for companies was exhaustively dealt with, and a report given of the test case on this question heard in the Court of Appeal. Another interesting legal question concerned the position created when a Local Government Councillor compounds with his creditors.

NOVEMBER. In the November "Labour Organiser" a valuable article appeared entitled "What To Do as Literature Secretary." We hope our readers have all read this article, and have retained it for passing on to future officers. We reprinted some important suggestions contained in the "Labour Bulletin" on the "Re-organisation of Local Government in England and Wales." Under "Law and Practice" we gave a full report

of the High Court Case *Rex v. Davies*, and we also reprinted in this issue certain little Acts of Parliament of interest to our readers. A varied and full number also contained particulars of the London Labour Party Membership Trophy; how votes were sought in the good old days—being an illustration from Coventry; and particulars of a paying competition being run each week at Crewe. Under "Notes and Notions" we discussed co-ordination of propaganda; the problems arising out of the extension of Local Government boundaries; and other interesting questions.

DECEMBER. In December we featured "The Big All-In Membership Campaign," an article of exceptional interest. Another instructive article was "The Post Office as an Aid to Organisation." This number contained some interesting and instructive reproductions of local literature. Another batch of "Little Acts Worth Knowing" were reprinted, as was also some useful information on the Conduct of Speakers' Classes. In this issue we reviewed the happenings of 1932.

PAMPHLETS RECEIVED.

"An Easy Outline of Modern Socialism," by Herbert Morrison. The Labour Party, price twopence.

The publication of the above pamphlet is yet another step by the Labour Party in the direction of being its own exponent of Socialism. The pamphlet is well and simply written, and should command a large and ready sale. Nothing like it has been on the market for years.

"Currency, Credit and the Unemployment Crisis," by Gilbert Slater. The Fabian Society, price twopence.

This, the latest Fabian Tract (No. 239) is a further contribution to the steadily growing mass of literature on the above questions. Gilbert Slater discusses the system of control of national currencies, and national credit by private profit-seeking institutions from the Socialist angle, and arrives at a conclusion with which all our readers will agree. This pamphlet will be useful where a low-priced and simple exposition is called for.

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gives such complete information about co-operative progress, such comprehensive facts and figures about the co-operative movement on every continent.

This is "THE PEOPLE'S YEAR BOOK," the 1933 edition of which is now on sale.

It contains also reviews of the past year in Science, Economics, Art, Literature, the Drama, &c., and interesting special articles: THE EFFECT OF SPORT NATIONALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY (discussed by experts of ten nations), A FIVE-YEAR PLAN FOR CO-OPERATION (reviewed by the leaders in nine countries), WORLD TRADE AND FINANCE (by Sir L. Chiozza Money), SOVIET RUSSIA (by Sidney Webb), THE DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE (by Sir Norman Angell), &c.

Order the new issue from your bookseller or co-operative society, or direct from the C.W.S. Publicity Department, 1 Balloon Street, Manchester.

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"The People's Year Book" for 1933

2/- IN STIFF PAPER
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Mr. T. Garnett, late of Sheffield, has now taken up duties as the Borough Organiser for Birmingham. His address is 180 Corporation Street, Birmingham.

Mr. R. Wallis, late of Stafford, has now taken up duties as Central Agent to the Leeds Labour Party. Address: 6 Blandford Gardens, Leeds, 2.

Mr. A. Glyn Evans, late agent at Greenwich, has been appointed National Organiser to the Socialist League.

Mr. R. Berriff, of the Central Division of Sheffield, has been appointed to the vacancy at Greenwich, created by Mr. Glyn Evans's retirement.

Mr. A. Kendall has been appointed full-time agent for the S.W. St. Pancras D.L.P.

Mr. D. McHenry, previously employed in a similar capacity at Whitehaven, has been appointed full-time agent.

The address of Mr. W. B. Lewcock, the newly-appointed National Organiser for the North-Eastern Area, is: 72 Beckfield Lane, Acomb, York.

The address (temporary) of Mr. G. Morris, the newly-appointed National Organiser for Wales, is c/o "Glenmore," 50 Holland Street, Ebbw Vale, Mon.

We were pleased to receive a copy of the Cornish "Labour News," the official monthly of the Cornish Labour Federation—price one penny, and worth it!

The "Labour Woman" has been reduced in price to three-halfpence. This reduction is accompanied by a considerable improvement in the get-up.

Bernard Shaw, in a Kingsway Hall lecture: "It is to be feared that when—if ever—prosperity returns, the majority of our people will hardly notice the change."

And again: "We must remember that you never quite know what a man is till you have given him power." Who said Shaw was failing?

Sidney and Beatrice Webb have published a new book, entitled "Methods of Social Study." This work is of exceptional interest to many of our readers.

Mr. A. E. Baker, of Tonbridge, Kent, a successful student under the examination scheme, writes:—"It is not my custom to give unsolicited testimonials, but my success in this examination is in no small measure due to the information gleaned from the columns of the "Labour Organiser."

The West Fulham Labour Party have commenced publication of the "West Fulham Labour Magazine," a quarto twelve-page production. Well printed, well edited, and the advertisements have completely covered the cost of the first free distribution of ten thousand copies.

The "New Nation," the new official organ of the League of Youth, commenced publication this month. We wish our youthful contemporary long life and large circulation.

The "Nelson and Colne Players" recently produced "Power and Poverty" (author Coun. W. J. Troup) by special invitation at Hull. A great success.

The "Daily Herald" circulation now exceeds 1,635,000 copies per day.

The "Daily Express" circulation is now given as 1,669,703 copies per day—a much slower increase.

The "Daily Mail" has dropped a hundred thousand copies a day this year. Present sale 1,735,652.

The Annual Conference of the Labour Party will this year be held at Hastings.

The Big "All-in" Membership Campaign

ARTICLE II.

We should like this month to assume that every Party has now obtained a supply of Party membership cards for 1933, and a supply of the necessary application forms and other literature.

Alas for the laggards! If there are any such known to our readers we most earnestly ask them to ginger up the Divisional Executive and officers and insist upon cards, etc., being immediately obtained.

If there are cash difficulties let these matters be explained to the Head Office of the Party, but it is sheer false economy to defer buying the cards; the want of cards means loss of income, and loss too of the possibilities from new recruits.

In this article, at any rate, we shall get on with the job. If the advice given last month has been taken, there will be abundant material to work from, and what is the use of setting about a job unless one has made some preparation for it?

In the first place, let us assume that the best system has been adopted, and that lists of supporters are now available, and better still that supporters have been written up on single cards, and all this information sent to the Local Parties or Ward Committees. As we have indicated, the work of preparation on the lines we stated, is essentially a central job, but the work of canvassing and invitation is a local one.

Now then is the time for local, ward and local Party meetings. Summon these meetings in a specially vigorous manner, and do all possible to get full meetings.

At these meetings plan out the work. Volunteers should be called for to visit old members and prospects, and a date fixed on which reports must be given.

Let us urge Local Committees not to get downhearted because insufficient volunteers come forward, or because at the first meeting it is impossible to make plans to cover either all the district, or all the prospects one would like to have visited. If some prospects are visited there will be some new members. And some new members will mean more people at the next meeting, and probably more people to help finish the job.

On the other hand, do not take this comfort as an excuse for leaving the job unfinished. The aim of every local Committee should be to visit the whole of the prospects by a definite date, if possible not later than the middle of February.

When Local Committees meet we sincerely hope that other business will not be allowed to interfere with the all-essential work of this campaign. It is of importance too that at each Committee Meeting there should be supplies of at least some of the application forms and literature needed in the campaign, and samples too of other matter supplied by the Head Office of the Party.

An admirable little envelope supplied by Headquarters is worth reproducing and will be found reprinted on page 11.

We urge Local Parties not to make the mistake of buying supplies of the above envelope and distributing them promiscuously at electors' houses. There is a better way of approach. This is the system:—

Wherever practicable, each elector to be visited should receive through the post or by hand a suitable circular letter signed by the candidate (see past issues of the "Labour Organiser"). If no candidate is in the field the circular letter can be signed by the President and Secretary of the Divisional Party or other prominent persons. The receipt of this circular should be followed up by a visit and when visiting, a suitable leaflet should be proffered immediately on arrival. The "Citizen" for January (7/6 per thousand) is quite suitable. The new leaflet "Appeals for Practical Christianity" by George Lansbury, M.P., (6/6 per thousand) may be more suitable in some places; or local literature may be used for introduction. Then if the prospect does not seem willing to join immediately, or if it appears indelicate to press for the subscription, the envelope may be left.

When an envelope has been delivered in this manner, a definite time should be fixed when it will be called for—say the following Saturday. Never leave these envelopes beyond a week, and it will pay better to cover a little ground at a time and do it thoroughly than to distribute a large

quantity of literature and not use pressure or influence at each house.

May we here remove any nervousness from the minds of those who feel that canvassing for members is hard or unpleasant work? On the contrary, work in the Membership Campaign is altogether pleasanter and easier than canvassing at an election. There is this difference; that at an election one approaches friend and foe alike. In this Campaign one approaches friends only, i.e., those who have been reported and recorded as supporters.

Therefore, our friends should take courage when visiting prospects. Call at a house as a friend, and expect to be received as a friend. It is the rarest possible experience to be rebuffed, especially when one is armed with the gift of a leaflet, or similar matter.

We have often urged in election canvassing that election canvassers should go together—indeed that streets should be canvassed in “gangs”—two on each side, or a long street taken by a party of six or eight.

In the Membership Campaign we advise somewhat different tactics. One expects more often to be invited inside. At election times one avoids long friendly chats, and does not get “tied up” at an elector’s house. Experiences will be different when canvassing prospects for membership.

One must remember that one is seeking new colleagues and brothers at arms. Visitation will be altogether a longer job, and on the whole unobtrusiveness will pay best, whereas advertising is sometimes an object aimed at when canvassing at elections. For these reasons we prefer visitations singly—one worker only. Many people will ask one person in, but they don’t care about taking in two.

And now for some alternative methods for making members. We will readily agree that canvassing and scientific selection of prospects on the lines we have been indicating are practical propositions in towns, but the method is not quite so applicable in areas where the population is to be found in groups of houses, and small hamlets and villages.

There are many populous areas where the electorate is distributed in the way just indicated, and which are solid Labour stronghold. In such circumstances one may arrange a campaign on different lines, and inasmuch

as each congregation of persons know one another intimately, the best way of making membership is to get hold of someone in the congregation who will influence the others. Street work by a stranger would not be half so effective.

In the first place, can the Local Party or Committee get someone in each little centre who will do the necessary? In many little centres it will be found that a small Committee already exists, but it cannot be persuaded to go out and scientifically canvass. We suggest in this case that the Committee should be put on their honour to produce a fifty per cent. increase or one hundred per cent. increase in membership by whatever method they choose. An acceptance of this proposal—and we have found acceptance fairly frequent—virtually means that local supporters will just touch their fellows whenever they meet them—over the garden wall, or, like Rebecca, at the well; the job is done just the same. There is great value in persuading a small Local Committee to determinedly seek to increase membership by fifty or one hundred per cent. by a given date.

The above is not the chain system. The chain system is a method specially adaptable to Women Sections, but also available for every Ward Committee and every Local Party. Briefly explained, it is an undertaking on the part of each member, or as many as possible, to bring at least one new member to the next meeting. The method is slow, but it can be effective. We do not consider that this method of making members is sufficient effort for any Party or Committee, but it may well be adopted by resolution as an indication on the part of every member that they will make at any rate a minimum of effort.

The chain system becomes the snowball system when the new members who are brought in in turn undertake to find another new member for the following meeting.

We mentioned last month the advisability of holding meetings of supporters or of making special efforts to secure the presence of supporters at meetings held during the Campaign. The problem will arise as to how to convert the presence of these supporters into membership?

Let us disabuse our minds at once of the suggestion that the distribution of membership forms at public

meetings is going to bring much grist to the mill. It won't do this, even if the meeting consists solely of picked supporters, and if a heaven-sent spell-binder has given his message from the platform.

Lots of people do not carry pencils; lots of people take time to write their names, and lots of people are moved by example more than individual impulse in a thing of this sort. Therefore, unless the whole audience has been electrified and there is a mass impulse, one does not see individuals bringing out their pencils, putting on their glasses and seeking a flat surface on which to write.

Returns can be got from meetings, but we believe it calls for a display of organising ability, which few Parties as yet have displayed. We, however, consider that a method sometimes adopted at by-elections in securing promise cards at meetings is well worth trying and is quite the best method to adopt to secure member-

ship application forms at a public meeting. It is this:—

In the middle of the meeting a suitable speaker should briefly explain the need for membership, the subscription payable, and the use of the application forms. Stewards should be posted round the hall and a pause should be made so that friends can fill in their forms and have the loan of pencils and some suitable boards or cards on which to write.

Once a start is made the thing is taken up, and present members might even be encouraged to fill in forms and pass them on for the sake of example.

Envelopes can be distributed and friends asked to place them on the collecting plates, i.e., either their cash to the collection, or their first subscription to the Party enclosed in the envelope. This method should be fairly productive. We do not advise attempts to get membership application forms signed in a meeting consisting mainly of unemployed.

THE LABOUR PARTY IS YOURS

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CONTROLLED BY THE PEOPLE
MAINTAINED BY THE PEOPLE

I accept the principles, policy and programme of the Labour Party, hereby enrol as a member, and enclose 6d. as my first 6 weeks' subscriptions at the rate of 1d. per week.

Name

Address

★ ALREADY the LARGEST PARTY in the COUNTRY
NOW FOR THE MILLION MEMBERS!

APPRECIATION.

Councillor E. A. Wood, Assistant-Secretary East Ham South Divisional Labour Party, writes:—

I thank you for the copy of the "Organiser" which will be passed to a friend, as I already receive same each month through the East Ham South Labour Party.

This book is genuinely appreciated by myself and I have found it invaluable in connection with my study of the Labour Party's Agents' Course.

To those who are desirous of gaining practical knowledge of how to organise and help forward the Party, I honestly recommend the "Organiser." There is not another publication like it.

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Notes from an Agent's Desk

1932's GOOD POINTS AND SOME OF 1933's PROBLEMS.

By "JACK CUTTER."

(The pseudonym "Jack Cutter" cloaks the identity of a Labour Agent who has contributed to these columns before. His articles dealing with the typical jobs of an Agent will appear from time to time, not because he is "a-tellin' of you," but just as a colleague seeking new ideas and criticisms in a friendly way.—Ed.)

With practically every journal in the kingdom unanimously agreeing that 1932 was an 'orrible year, a nightmare of a year, a twelvemonths of gibbering ghosts and bewildering bogies; with their gleeful unity in ushering it out with a final kick in the pants, it is fitting that the columns of the "L.O." should record the fact that from our point of view at any rate poor old 1932 had many good points, and we have no need to resort to the Dictionary of Inveective in preparing its funeral oration.

In its early months the Membership Campaign added six figures to our national membership roll. Wakefield and Wednesbury came along to back our prophecies, to confound the Dismal Jimmies and to pass sentence upon close on two hundred Tory M.P.'s now misrepresenting industrial constituencies. The Annual Conference was not only the best ever; in a week it silenced the querulous doubters and gave the movement such a tonic as it has never had. The municipal elections endorsed all the clear signs that the movement is in fine fettle by bettering 1929's peak figures, and, indeed, proving that 1929 was not a peak after all, but a mere foothill on our way to the summit.

So 1932 didn't treat us at all badly, despite the financial worries it brought to every Labour Party secretary consequent upon its astronomical unemployment figures. Financial worry is not always the curse it is made out to be, so far as Labour Parties are concerned. It serves to keep us keyed up, our eyes on every member's subs, and on every chance to rope in converts. We have seen parties removed from the need to worry about money lose a good deal of their zip and allow the services of good bands of voluntary workers to rot through non-use.

And now for 1933 and a new set of problems; a year of incessant pro-

paganda and still higher memberships.

Now that quite a respectable number of parties have four-figure memberships, perhaps the biggest problem each new year brings to their secretaries is: how to keep the live interest of the members—how to keep them from becoming faded, impatient, indifferent or fed up with the sight of the collector's face.

In my own case, with a membership approaching 4,000, it is rather a task; it is impossible to retain personal contact with them all and every new year thought has to be given to getting across to every member that feeling of intimacy with the party's affairs which counts for so much. A personally addressed new year message from the candidate and officers is valuable and effective. It is a good plan to arrange that the Ward annual meetings are held in January and to vary the notice of this particular meeting so that it is signed by the Chairman and Secretary of the Divisional Party, instead of by the Ward or L.L.P. secretary as usual. If it is written in confident strains, thanking the members for their help last year and praising the Ward officers for their co-operation, concluding with a personal appeal to all members to be present at the Annual Meeting, as the Chairman and yourself would specially like to have a talk with them (and arrange the agenda accordingly), it will generally bring fresh faces along.

Overprinting the blank spaces of the membership cards to give an idea of the size, dignity and prestige of the Party and the vast amount of work it has to do, gives the members a pride in their membership right at the beginning of the year.

A well-arranged reception might be tried, as I am trying it this month. It is perhaps a little expensive, but I think it will be worth it. The candidate or member and his wife should send a neatly-printed invitation card to each member "requesting the pleasure of your company" at the reception in the best hall in the town. Admission free, but refreshments on sale. A three hours' programme of songs, "turns" and a dance or two, interspersed with short speeches outlining the local party's organising and propaganda programme for the new

year in pushful style, with boosts for new members—you get the idea. Make it friendly and jolly and get the right atmosphere, presenting every person present with one of the Labour Party's excellent new subscription envelopes, perhaps, to ensure that a good many will start their new year subs right away.

Simple methods, but usually effective, and whether you agree with them or not, it is good to reflect that here we are at the beginning of '33 considering methods of getting on with the job for the future instead of wasting our time as a good many of us were doing at the beginning of '32, holding querulous inquests on the mistakes of '31. Thank Heaven we snapped out of *that* mood p.d.q.

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ORGANISING OUTSIDE HELPERS.

Nowadays in practically every by-election—Parliamentary or Local Government—it is the practice to summon in aid from surrounding areas.

Sometimes the outside help thus accorded is of considerable dimensions, and in a hardly fought Parliamentary by-election many hundreds of workers may be brought in from neighbouring constituencies.

In such case the organisation of these workers becomes of considerable importance. Unless organised a great deal of proffered help may be wasted: time may be lost by workers reporting at places which are already well supplied, and altogether the position to be avoided is that of finding outside workers falling over one another in the Committee Rooms, and having nothing ready for them to do.

While dealing with this matter, we should like to say that while we are profound believers in canvassing, we have little respect for the old-established custom of asking every fresh worker to take over some canvass cards. The aim should be to find *suitable* work for every worker. We have known by-elections where the local workers have occupied all the posts in the Committee Rooms, and were too timid or idle to attempt to canvass, but they never made any other use of workers from the surrounding constituencies.

The problems connected with this matter are in the main best dealt with at the source—that is to say, the supply of workers from outside should, as far as possible, be controlled and directed. The Meetings Department will, in a Parliamentary by-election, look after those who are capable of speaking, but at least a fair share of outside workers should be drafted into the writing-up department, to act as stewards or messengers, and take on the sundry jobs connected with the election other than canvassing. The majority of outside workers will, of course concentrate on the canvass.

At the Wednesbury By-election a system was adopted of sending cards to the surrounding constituencies, the cards indicating the name of the Committee Room at which particular workers were desired to report. Thus one town would be asked to report in a certain place in the Wednesbury Division, but workers from another

neighbouring town would be asked to report in another place.

This system worked very well. It avoided an over-concentration of outside workers at Headquarters, and it tended to feed the areas most needing workers.

Since the Wednesbury By-election the system has been adapted for use in Municipal by-elections at one or two places in the Midlands.

Below we reproduce a sample of literature from Dudley, where the system was adopted at the November elections. Dudley is, of course, surrounded by County constituencies, and the method was used to rally supporters from these areas, where, of course, no elections were being held. Dudley secured some magnificent victories.

DUDLEY MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 1ST, 1932.
Dear Friend,

The Dudley Labour Party is making a great effort to increase its representation on the Town Council, and this invitation is extended to you in the hope that you will be able to assist on Polling Day, Tuesday, November 1st.

If you could report to the Labour Party Headquarters, rear of Holloway Chambers, Priory Street, Dudley, any time after 9 a.m., you will be allocated to one of our Ward Committee Rooms in an area where your services could best be utilised: or if you live nearer to Netherton, report to the Netherton Labour Club, Halesowen Road, where you will be correctly advised.

The Dudley Headquarters are close to the G.P.O., Wolverhampton Street, and only three minutes from Dudley Market Place (entrance by way of Court Passage).

There is no need to urge upon you

the great importance of securing a Victory for Labour at these elections, as a means of condemnation of the general policy of the National Government, and any help you can give will be greatly appreciated.

With thanks in anticipation,

Yours fraternally,

HAROLD CHAMBERS.

Please bring this with you.

TEAR OFF HERE.

DUDLEY LABOUR PARTY.

To the Officer in charge of
..... Ward Committee
Room
The Bearer, M.....
of
has come over to assist in the fight
to-day. Please give a hearty welcome,
and link up with one of your Ward's
Workers to get Voters to the Poll.

HAROLD CHAMBERS.

**[Do ALL the officers
of your Party get the
"L.O."?]**

[If not, why not?]

[The "L.O." serves ALL !]

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—From "Party Organisation."

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General Secretary—John Taylor
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M

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